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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an introductory examination of the current situation among postsecondary faculty in China. It begins by sketching the intellectual structure as it has waxed and waned during the 40-year history of New China. The bulk of the paper then addresses the current conditions of life and work for those intellectuals who are college and university faculty. Information presented includes: how the postsecondary teacher's workload is determined; the determination of salary and future raises and bonuses; and how the government encourages teachers to do some outside work to earn extra money while using their abilities to greater advantage. Included in the discussion on compensation are other extra money. Included in the discussion on compensation are other benefits, such as traveling on school business and housing arrangements for ranking faculty members. Finally, faculty evaluation is reviewed. The paper concludes with the observation that political reform has not yet kept pace with economic reform, and this condition may impede educational reform as well. Contains 18 footnotes. (GLR)

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POSTSECONDARY FACULTY IN CHINA: CURRENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS

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Postsecondary Faculty inChina:
Current Socio-Political Conditions

Harold A. Smith and Pheny Zhou Smith

Today in China there are three independent school systems: full-time schools, spare-time schools, and work-study schools. Full-time schools at all levels constitute the bulk of the nation's educational institutions and play the main role in the country's education. They consist of full-time primary, full-time secondary, specialized secondary, and full-time tertiary institutions (Table 1). The last mentioned level, full-time colleges and universities, felt the strongest effects of the chaotic forces of Mao Zedeng's version of Pandora's box. The particular focus of this report will be on the life and work of faculty in postsecondary schools.

From 1966-76, China's education system was the target of one of the most radically reactionary programs in any nation. Today, almost no-one in China has anything good to say about that period. Most, in fact, say it was the most destructive decade faced by the Chinese people since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, and has been blamed for destroying almost a generation of promising scholars.[1]

Since 1977, everyone in China seems to be concentrating on putting the 'chaotic decade' behind them and overcoming the amorphous forces that brought almost all constructive education to a halt. Intellectuals are often overlooked in expatriate discussions about China, but it is impossible to fully understand college and university faculty without considering the role of intellectuals. Therefore, we will first sketch the intellectual structure as it has waxed and waned during the 40-year history of New China.

Primary research for this report was undertaken from 1984-88 when the authors were in China at the invitation of the Foreign Experts Bureau and the Liaoning Education Commission. Though we are indebted to both agencies and various individuals throughout China for financial support, information, and cordial collegiality, only we are responsible for the opinions and any factual errors appearing in the report.

The Chinese intellectual hierarchy from "Liberation" to "Cultural Revolution" was basically unchanged from the one present during the later years of the Guomindang government. The term "intellectuals" during this period was applied to persons with a "zhongzhuan" (secondary level vocational or specialized technical schools) or "dazhuan" (three-year postsecondary vocational or specialized technical schools) education or higher. This broad category was subdivided into three levels: "little intellectuals" (those who were"zhongzhuan" graduates); intellectuals" (those who were "dazhuan," college, or university graduates); and "high level intellectuals" (those who were university graduates or higher and who had almost always studied abroad). Since these designations, except for the "high level intellectuals," were not official titles, another way of describing the division, among university faculty, would be to equate "intellectuals" with almost all faculty members below the most senior associate professors and "high level intellectuals" with full professors and a very small number of associate professors (levels 1, 2, 3, or 4 on Table 2).

The attitude of the Communists toward intellectuals was to "use them, but with caution," because almost all high level intellectuals had been educated abroad, and therefore influenced by non-Party values, and many of the other intellectuals had studied under the high level intellectuals, thus becoming "untrustworthy" themselves. The only ones who were likely to be trusted politically were those who had been trained in the USSR during the 1950s. However, very few of the Communists had any higher education, therefore, almost none of the political leaders after 1949 were intellectuals. Although many intellectuals did not hold leadership positions in the Party and government organizations, they were often targets of any political campaign.

The foreign influence among the ranks of intellectualism was a major reason Mao Zedong and the Party wanted to revolutionalize intellectual societies. The high level intellectuals, especially, held too much influence and respect among society and were a constant source of danger -- that is, they disagreed with Party policy -- to the Party, and except for those who had been trained in the USSR, intellectuals were not trusted. Mao's solution to the problem was to instigate young students, especially the low-level intellectuals, who practically worshipped him to

overthrow the older high level intellectuals, resulting in the chaos known , almost euphemistically, as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

During these years, almost all intellectuals were removed from their jobs, castigated, shamed, and "sent down" to the countryside to "learn from the peasants." This often meant doing the most menial, unpleasant tasks such as emptying the outhouses and carrying "honey buckets" to become fertilizer in the fields. The hierarchy had been turned upside down. The younger intellectuals soon realized that they had been "used" by the Party, when they too began being "sent down," but by then the damage had been done.

The "opening" of Chinese society to the world brought a return of most of the intellectual system, but sadly decimated. High level intellectuals had made up a relatively tiny portion of the population before 1966. Ravaged by age, ill health, lack of proper medical treatment -- even mistreatment, persecution and murder -- very few remained.

The general supply of intellectuals has increased with the rush to reenter higher education. The government, for its part, has expanded the ranks of high level intellectuals by the expeditious action of "promoting" persons who were as low as senior lecturers to the rank of full professor (with a small raise, not commenserate with that formerly paid to full professors). Many of the remaining older professors have been reelevated to positions of authority in technical areas, but except for the USSR-trained intellectuals they have not been placed in high political positions. Only the USSR-trained intellectuals, for example Li Peng, are "trustworthy."

The remainder of this paper will look at the current conditions of life and work for those intellectuals who are college and university faculty. First, we will discuss faculty workload, then move on to salary and benefits, and finally consider the procedure of evaluation for promotion.

A university faculty member normally has one or two courses, each of which meets four hours a week. Normal class size is thirty, though lecture classes may have 50-100 students. Undergraduate classes are often taught by lecturers with assistant teachers correcting homework and answering student's questions after class. Assistant teachers may also participate in preparing and presenting lectures and guiding experiments. Lecturers, associate professors and

professors generally do some research work and write articles and books. Professors may be assisted by more than one assistant teacher or even by lecturers. First year teachers have no official rank and rarely have teaching duties.

In accordance with guidelines of the State Education Commission, the following indicates how a postsecondary teacher's workload is determined:[2]

1. Teachers are expected to work the equivalent of 8 hours a day, 5 days a week (classes meet 6 days), 42 weeks a year = 1,680 work hours a year.

2. Actual teaching-work hours are calculated as: number of class periods multiplied by 3 to 5 multiplied by the number of courses. The factor of 3 to 5 represents preparation hours, counseling students and correcting papers. The exact factor used is set by the school according to the perceived difficulty of teaching a particular course.

An English teacher, for example, usually has 4 hours a week with one class and will teach two classes of about 30 students each. The work hours will be computed in this way: 4 multiplied by 3 to 5 multiplied by 2 = 24 to 40 hours. If a previously untaught course is assigned, the coefficient may be (5 to 7), reflecting greater need for preparation, and one or two semesters of preparation time may be allotted to develop the course. In addition, if guiding graduate students in their research work and writing of papers, the teacher's semester work load may be augmented as follows: Sum of students X 60 to 250). The factor of 60 is used when students are taking classes; 200 is used when guiding master's level research and writing; 250 is used when guiding doctoral level research and writing.

Some teachers work very conscientiously. After lunch, they go to the classroom (or in the evening, to the students' dormitory) to answer questions, and students may go to their teacher's home to ask questions at any time, and often do as late as midnight. Calculation of such real work hours cannot be exact,but the system described above tries to allow for it.

Some teachers do administrative or political work as an additional part of their work assignments; for example, Chairman of a department, Party Secretary of a department, Director

of a teaching section; these positions usually equal 300-500 teaching hours. Persons in these positions may also teach classes and guide graduate students. Professor Yu Qun, Chairman of the Machine Design and Manufacturing Department at Beijing Agricultural Mechanization College, guides three master's students and teaches Terrain Vehicle Systems Mechanics. He also does research work and has published numerous papers. Usually, teachers of Basic Courses, i.e., English, Math, Physics and Mechanics have lectures two terms a year. But, some teachers of specialized courses, i.e., Machine Design, Soil Mechanics, etc. may have classes only one term a year.[3]

Teachers with no courses assigned during a particular term are expected to work eight hours a day. Sometimes they attend other teachers' lectures in order to improve their teaching or research skills. Although this is particularly true of assistant teachers, it may also occur with lecturers, associate professors and professors.

Usually, the teacher's salary is determined by the number of years worked, while rank is decided on seniority plus research work, publications, etc. Sometimes teachers who have made outstanding contributions in their field, will be promoted in rank, but not necessarily receive a raise in salary. For example, Li Ming-rui, who graduated from Beijing University in the 1960s and is now an associate professor there, is internationally known for his work in finite element analysis; and Zhang Qing-an an associate professor at Beijing Agricultural Mechanization Institute, graduated in the 1950's and has made many important contributions to computer applications in the Agricultural Ministry. Both presently receive salaries in the lecturer range of the scale, though the central government has recently announced that people who have not had a raise in pay grade since the 1960s will soon be given raises.[4]

Table 2 shows the salary scale presently approved by the State Education Commission.[5] Generally, professors would have salaries in the top three steps (1-3); assistant professors would have salaries in the next three steps (4-6); lectures' salaries would be in the next three (7-9); and assistant teachers' would be in the last four (10-13). However, as mentioned above, many

faculty members have lower salaries than they should in relation to their titles. This is another legacy of the "Cultural Revolution." During that period, no teachers received promotions or raises. Most felt fortunate to even be able to teach rather than mucking out cesspools or performing heavy labor in the countryside. After the change in national leadership, promotions began to reoccur, but salary raises have come somewhat more slowly. And at the same time that many people who have not had raises since the 1960s, or earlier, will soon receive raises, the central government has also said all persons who reach the age of retirement must retire immediately, which includes many of those who would expect raises. This is all the more important because retirement benefits are a percentage of the last pay grade.

The cost of living increments relate to different areas of the nation as assessed by the government according to the local standard of living. Table 2, column 3 is for counties that are isolated from a city of any size, but which have enough resources not to need expensive transport of basic items. An example is Zigong in Sichuan Province. Area 4 also includes counties, plus small towns, and even some provincial capitals, e.g., Guiyang in Guizhou Province. Area 5 includes medium size cities, such as Changsha in Hunan Province and Chengdu in Sichuan Province. Area 6 includes large cities and developed areas like Beijing (central city area only). From here on it is more complicated, but area 7 includes places where the cost of living is higher, such as Fuzhou in Fujian Province. Area 8 includes Shanghai (central city area only). Area 9 includes Huixian in Gansu Province and Aihui in Heilongjiang Province. Area 10 includes such areas as Inner Mongolia in the far North of China. Area 11 includes such diverse areas as the provinces of Tibet and Xinjiang, and the city of Guangzhou (Canton) in Guangdong Province.

The salary scale was to be reformed in the second half of 1986, putting it in line with ranks and relating salary to responsibility and contributions.[6] Such a reform was to change the previous emphasis on longevity or quantitative, rather than qualitative measurements. It has, in fact, not met that expectation.[7]

Most teachers' income is limited to their salary, although they may receive a small amount

in bonuses. And for a long time, teachers have been strictly confined to their own departments, whether or not they could be most effective there. Each semester the department would assign the teachers a certain number of courses, regardless of their specialities, or students' needs. Some teachers would have nothing to do for the whole semester if their courses were not offered, but they were not allowed to teach in other departments, let alone other schools.[8] There were no built-in incentives or penalties to encourage teachers to work hard or improve their teaching. Good teachers didn't enjoy any better treatment and poor ones still went on lecturing in spite of student protests and complaints.

However, the government now encourages faculty members to do some outside work and earn extra money while using their abilities to greater advantage. Under this experimental system, faculty members are given contracts for one semester or one year by their own department or other departments. They contract to teach a certain number of courses and the departments pay them, apart from their regular salaries, bonuses or subsidies for extra work (overtime). In some schools, the system has been extended to department heads, deans and school managerial officials who are employed by the university president.[9] Their responsibilities, powers and salaries are all clearly stated in the contract.

Some universities are now even beginning to hire professors from other schools as part-time professors, advisors and laboratory technicians. A few have even been later appointed as permanent staff members in the new school. Some of these part-time faculty and staff have been able to solve technical problems, design machines, etc. for factories or farms, saving the organization large amounts of money.[10]

Anyone can accept invitations to lecture for special training classes, which are usually organized by colleges, factories or management organizations. For every class hour the organizer must pay 2-4 Yuan, depending upon the professional level of the instructor. However, the instructor does not necessarily get the entire amount paid. If the classes are taught during vacation or after the instructor has fulfilled the total teaching hours for the term, he or she may

receive up to the full fee. If the term's teaching task is not yet completed, as little as 20% may be retained. In the case of a teacher who has finished his or her teaching task for the term, 50-80% usually may be retained. The balance is remitted to their parent institution.[11] So far, the new contract system has encouraged the teachers spiritually, but has not rewarded them monetarily as they receive little more than before.

Other than salary and benefits, differences are minor between ranks, but some of the differences are important enough to mention. Assigned housing may be more spacious for successively higher ranks. But, housing is in very short supply throughout China, affecting teachers along with everyone else. By 1983, the average per capita floor space was only 4.6 square meters, one square meter greater than in 1978. About one third of urban households still suffer from overcrowding.[12]

For teachers, separate apartments are not usually assigned in the first three years of marriage or work at an institution.[13] Single teachers and married couples without children will usually live in a dormitory, the singles sharing a single room with two or three of their colleagues. There have been cases, personally known to the authors, of a married couple having to share a 'three person room' with a single colleague. By the time a teacher has made associate or full professor, usually after twenty or more years, he or she will be assigned a four room apartment, including two bedrooms, living room, and kitchen. There will be a tiny bathroom as well.

When traveling on school business, associate professors are entitled to more comfortable train space, (i.e., 'soft sleeper' rather than 'hard') than is available to lecturers. In addition, they may spend more on hotel and meals.[14] In daily affairs, little difference exists between different ranks. All teachers are entitled to health care that is practically free. A standard fee for seeing the doctor is .05 Yuan, with treatment and medicine free. In work responsibilities, however, the status is quite different. A school dean or department chair usually must be an associate or full professor. The Chair of the Academic Council must be a full professor, as must the Chief Editor

of a college or university journal.[15]

In teaching, research, and development, a professor's influence is important. Decisions affecting such areas as the setting up of a new department, curriculum, research project, etc. will weigh heavily the opinions of full professors. Likewise, which paper gets published, who receives a promotion, and final determination of who receives graduate degrees are affected by input from professors.

Faculty are concerned that the government has adopted policies aimed at restoring the reputation of the professoriate and improving their social position, yet, these policies are not often effectively implemented at the local level. In fact, recent economic reforms have enabled some people -- primarily farmers and individuals able to benefit from foreign connections -- to become rich, but faculty conditions have improved little. Nationwide income distribution for state employees in 1985 showed educators and scientific researchers averaging 1182 *yuan* per year while construction workers and miners averaged 1556, transportation and postal workers averaged 1452, industry workers averaged 1285, urban public utilities workers averaged 1234, and finance and insurance (a relatively new career in China) workers averaged 1216.[16]

The system for evaluating teachers begins with every section holding a meeting to evaluate its teachers each term, or at least each year. The teacher first evaluates him or herself, either orally or in writing. Then, colleagues and section leaders evaluate the teacher's work and comment on such aspects as work attitude, effectiveness, political work, and how well he or she gets along with others. After this process is completed, the section elects 10% of its teachers as Model Teachers.

The process continues at Department level, with 10% of the teachers being recognized as Model Teachers and being recommended to the university or college for recognition. At school level, only one or two teachers will be awarded Model Teacher status. The recognition system goes through city level to province and even national level. At each level, teachers receive bonuses or prizes. But, recognition at school level or higher usually carries with it promotion

and wider renown - -invitations to give special lectures or classes, do more important research, etc.

The department has some decision-making power. It has the right to promote teachers, both in rank and salary (the latter is subject to approval by the institution), and to decide whether a teacher can study abroad. Usually, promotion is dependent upon a combination of the educational level and having at least three years in each level before being promoted. The institution, however, can exceed the common regulations and promote more than one rank at a time, e.g., Pan Cheng-biao of Beijing University was promoted from assistant teacher to associate professor in 1982.[17]

Since the end of the "Cultural Revolution," universities have done a lot to help and encourage middle-aged and young teachers to improve their educational level and skill. Every year, the schools choose some teachers to study in other universities in China or abroad. In 1984, the Beijing Agricultural Mechanization College sent more than 20 persons abroad for advanced study and sent 28 in 1985.[18]

Colleges and universities now encourage young teachers to take over research as well as to improve their teaching skills. Young teachers are given many chances to join research groups by assigning research tasks to them, and asking older professors and lecturers to guide them. The teacher may also ask for research work and attend lectures given by other teachers.

This paper has taken only an introductory look at the current situation among postsecondary faculty in China. The present Chinese government recognizes that the nation must modernize, that its people are no longer satisfied with only "faya kaihua" (buds and blossoms), but increasingly demand to enjoy the fruits of their hardship and labor. Recent political upheavals in Beijing have indicated that political reform has not kept pace with economic reform, though economic reform has also been inconsistent. The seriousness of the effect of the political unrest is likely to place educational reform 'further back on the stove.' If hard-line leaders continue in control, economic reform is likely to slow. If moderate leaders regain control, there may still be

'more important' things to think about than the improvements in financial conditions of postsecondary faculty. In such a situation nobody truly wins and the Chinese faculty members are the greatest losers.

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Table 1

Full-time School System

AGE					GRADE
22					
21					
20					
19					
18	(Secondary Specialized Schools)				12
17	Academic Senior Middle School	Vocational School	Specialized Technical Skill School	Teacher Training School (Elem.)	11
16					10
15					9
14		Junior Middle School			8
13					7
12					6
11					5
10		Elementary			4
9					3
8					2
7					1
6		Kindergarten			
5					
4					
3					
6mo					

Table 2

Wage Scale for Postsecondary Teachers
State Educational Commission figures for 1985-86
(Source, State Education Commission)

	Cost of living increments (Yuan per month)								
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Grade									
1	318.0	327.0	336.0	345.0	354.0	363.0	372.0	381.0	390.0
2	265.0	272.5	280.0	287.5	295.0	302.5	310.0	317.5	325.0
3	222.5	229.5	235.0	241.5	248.0	254.0	260.5	266.5	273.0
4	191.0	196.0	201.5	207.0	212.5	218.0	223.0	228.5	234.0
5	163.0	168.0	172.5	177.0	181.5	186.5	191.0	195.5	200.0
6	138.0	141.5	145.5	149.5	153.5	157.5	161.0	165.0	169.0
7	116.5	120.0	123.0	126.5	130.0	133.0	136.5	139.5	143.0
8	97.5	100.5	103.0	106.0	108.5	111.5	114.0	117.0	119.5
9	82.5	85.0	87.5	89.5	92.0	94.5	96.5	99.0	101.5
10	72.0	74.0	76.0	78.0	80.0	82.0	84.5	86.5	88.5
11	63.5	65.5	67.0	69.0	71.0	72.5	74.5	76.0	78.0
12	57.0	59.0	60.5	62.0	63.5	65.5	67.0	68.5	70.0
13	51.5	53.0	54.5	56.0	57.0	58.5	60.0	61.5	63.0

Footnotes

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